

**STATE SENATOR • RAYMOND E. BASHAM • 8TH DISTRICT**

# **Basham Press Release**

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## **SEN. BASHAM ANNOUNCES GRANT FOR DOWNRIVER AMERICORPS**

LANSING- State Sen. Ray Basham (D-Taylor) announced today that The Guidance Center in Southgate has been awarded a \$260,399 grant from the Michigan Community Service Commission to operate a Michigan AmeriCorps program. AmeriCorps is a federal program administered nationally by the Corporation for National and Community Service.

“AmeriCorps members help build stronger communities by tutoring and mentoring our youth, building affordable housing, cleaning parks and recreational areas, running after-school programs, and helping to respond to natural disasters,” said Sen. Basham. “The Downriver CARES Program will address many of the needs in our communities and will surely be an invaluable asset to the people in this region.”

The Guidance Center will administer the Downriver CARES (Community, Action, Resources, Enrichment, Service) AmeriCorps Program which will enroll 21 full-time equivalent AmeriCorps members to provide programs for and in support of youth that will increase their social and emotional readiness to learn. Specific areas that members will serve include Family Resource Centers, Head Start programs serving low-income pre-school children and family literacy programs.

“In an increasingly competitive world, we must make every effort to provide our children with the skills necessary to face the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century,” said Basham. “AmeriCorps

promises to be an important partner in preparing the children of the Downriver region to meet the challenges ahead.”

The program is slated to begin in September 2004. People interested in being AmeriCorps members must be at least 17 years of age and be willing to work hard to make a difference in their community. To find out more about the Downriver CARES Program, contact Joe Spain of The Guidance Center at 734-785-7705 extension 7209.

### **BACKGROUND:**

AmeriCorps programs are similar to a domestic Peace Corps. Community organizations host teams of individuals, called members, to implement programs that strengthen local communities. Members are ages 17 and older and commit at least one year to AmeriCorps. In return for this year of service, members receive a modest living stipend and an education award. They can serve in a full- or part-time capacity. AmeriCorps is a federal program administered nationally by the Corporation for National and Community Service.

During a typical year:

- Michigan’s AmeriCorps members improve the lives of more than 110,000 people
- Approximately 700 members serve in local communities through Michigan’s AmeriCorps programs.
- Each AmeriCorps member funded by the MCSC recruits an average of 26 volunteers—that’s more than 18,000 volunteers per year.

The Michigan Community Service Commission is a state agency that builds a culture of service by providing vision and resources to strengthen communities through volunteerism. Chaired by First Gentleman Daniel Granholm Mulhern, the MCSC funds AmeriCorps, Learn and Serve, Citizen Corps, and Volunteer Investment Grants. It also oversees Mentor Michigan and the Governor’s Service Awards. For more information about the Michigan Community Service Commission visit [www.michigan.gov/mcsc](http://www.michigan.gov/mcsc) or call (517) 335-4295.

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